

## LITURGICAL READINGS

### 1. Deuteronomy 30, 10-14:

The first five books of the Old Testament form what the Jews call the TORAH (law). The Greeks called it "The Book in Five Volumes" and so we have today the anglicized form of the Greek name -- 'Pentateuch'.

Deuteronomy is the fifth book of this set. Its name was given to it by the Greeks -- "Deuteros nomos", which means 'Second Law', since it contains the laws given by God to Moses.

This book is regarded as one of the most important in the Old Testament and is frequently quoted in the New. Christ quoted from it in answer to the threefold temptation of Satan and in today's gospel we find the lawyer quoting it in reply to Christ's question (Deut. 6, 5).

The passage read today shows the close relationship God had established with His chosen people. He had clearly revealed His divine plan and given them Commandments (their part of the covenant or agreement), which were the signposts on the road to union with God. Hence there was no excuse for their infidelity.

2. Luke 10, 25-37:

(a) The question "who is my neighbor?" appears harmless enough to us, but in Christ's day it was a subject of controversy. "Neighbor" for most Jews meant only a fellow-Jew, while the Pharisees and Essenes restricted it to members of their own particular sects.

(b) Though it is not stated that the victim of the robbers was a Jew, it is at least implied. At any rate this is not the precise point of the story. The real drama is that, while the Jewish priest and levite passed by because they did not want to get involved or be delayed, one of the hated Samaritans became the hero of the story.

Instead of answering the question "who is my neighbor?", which implicitly implied that some people would not come under such a category, Christ said that a man's neighbor is anyone in need.

(c) "And your neighbor as yourself": This is not part of the passage quoted from Deut. 6, 4-5, but is definitely part of Old Testament teaching. See, for example, Deut. 10, 19 and Leviticus 19, 34.

(d) "Two silver pieces" -- one piece, called a "denarius" represented a day's wages.

(e) Jericho is twenty miles from Jerusalem. Since the Holy City was 2500 feet above sea level, the journey was downhill. Hence Christ said: "There was a man GOING DOWN from . . . ."

(f) The first and third readings are harmonized since the law, which Moses told the Jews to follow, was correctly quoted by the lawyer.

3. Colossians 1, 15-20:

The Christian community of Colossae in Asia Minor was not

converted by St. Paul, but probably by one of his Ephesian converts. St. Paul never visited Colossae (see 1, 4 and 2, 1).

This is a very beautiful letter, full of doctrine, and should be read by all. Like his other letters it was written by Paul in order to deal with problems that had arisen in the community.

The doctrine of today's text is that -- Christ is both God and man and so is above all creatures. In Him we are reconciled to God and have access to Him. Let us show our gratitude by being faithful to Him.

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